



Office of the Vice President Student Affairs

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November 2020 Report
Contribution Hours: 173.75

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Territorial Acknowledgement

Oki, I acknowledge and honour the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Lethbridge is also part of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. The Blackfoot name of the University of Lethbridge is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. Thank you for the privilege of working, learning, and living in this place. I am grateful and I am committed to doing my part in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action in my day-to-day life.

Adapted from the [University of Calgary](#) and the [University of Lethbridge](#).

Comments

November marks the halfway point of the VP Student Affairs (VPSA) position and I am keenly aware that it will not be long before the annual Students' Union elections rolls around and I will be transitioning my successor. Institutional continuity has been a key priority for me. This means developing the infrastructure for institutional knowledge to be passed consistently from year-to-year and have it continually improved. If anyone is interested in the VPSA position, please contact me!

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Clubs

Continuing my work from October, I have been examining structural ways to improve the systems and processes surrounding clubs. At the November Clubs' Council meeting, I presented the Bylaws & Policies that pertain to Clubs' Council and I solicited feedback from clubs. In particular, I was curious on if Clubs' Council was actually helpful, what people thought about the meeting frequency, as well as the effectiveness of club probation. There was lots of great discussion that helped to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of Clubs' Council, which is a unique governance structure that I have yet to encounter at any other institution. I have been working closely with William, the Clubs and Student Involvement Assistant, and other SU staff to discuss this feedback and take actionable steps.

Another structural change that I am exploring is the creation of a clubs training course on Moodle. In my research, there are other Students' Unions that provide an annual training for clubs, either in-person or in an online format. In their policies, it is required for clubs to complete this training prior to receiving full club privileges. The creation of clubs training course for the University of Lethbridge would help to standardize the information that is given out to clubs, limit the number of frequently asked questions to SU staff, and ensure that club executives can operate their clubs more effectively. Furthermore, the establishment of this infrastructure would allow for optional training to be added in the future. For example, other institutions have added anti-racism/anti-oppression training, as well as training on LGBTQ+, and bystander intervention.

Western Regional Speakers Panel

This is a committee that I currently chair. The membership consists of representatives from 5 different Students' Unions in the Western provinces. This committee was formed to plan the Angela Davis event that happened back in early September, and now we are in the process of planning a second speaker event for late-January to coincide with Bell Let's Talk Day. The panel of speakers come from diverse backgrounds and they will be having a conversation around mental health, identity, and intersectionality. Keep your eyes out on the ULSU social media for an announcement of the speakers and how to register for the event!

Programming

Online programming this month has included a partnership with RBC on Campus, the Dhillon Business Students' Association, and the SU in hosting two online workshops on personal branding . This included an excellent presentation from Olympian Haley Daniels with practical tips of marketing yourself and how to network. Additionally, Trivia Night with the Art Gallery was hosted. There are monthly trivia nights planned for the second semester.

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Through the Online Engagement Committee, there were several ideas that were implemented or will be implemented in the near future. This included Ethan McGinnis, a Student-at-Large on the committee, running online games through the SU Discord server over the Fall Break (you can join the Discord server here: <https://discord.gg/NqTMuMD>). This also included the planning of several contests that will be run on the SU social media over the coming months to give students a more passive way for them to interact online.

Over the course of this month, I have begun exploring the feasibility of hosting a drive-in movie event during the second semester. More details to come!

Understanding and Responding to Sexual Violence: Level One

As a member of the University's Preventing Sexual Violence Action Committee, I was excited to hear about the announcement of an online training available to all students, staff, and faculty. Titled "Understanding and Responding to Sexual Violence: Level One", this is a 45 minute e-learning course developed by Courtney Smith, the University's Sexual Violence Prevention Educator. This has been in the works for over the past few months and it is one step towards building a culture of consent in our university community. You can take the course here: <https://moodle.uleth.ca/202003/course/view.php?id=2064>

General Assembly

At the November General Assembly (GA) meeting, Keifer Jennings was elected as one of the Dhillon School of Business representatives - congratulations! During this GA meeting, I also struck up the GA Transition Committee and ULSU Awards Committee. These committees are traditionally struck up later in the year, but I found it necessary to start planning earlier, as the process of the annual awards ceremony and transition would have to be adapted due to COVID-19.

uVolunteer

I have had several meetings with Abigail Shakespeare from Advancement, and Nicholas Canning, the uVolunteer Program Coordinator. We have been focusing on how to integrate volunteerism and community service more into the fabric of the university experience. This has led to fruitful conversations, such as the creation of new sponsored club awards that recognize clubs in their work to develop campus pride and serve the community. Additionally, we have been exploring tangible ways to partner with existing programs such as Agility to connect students with the needs of the community. This could look like students working with a local non-profit organization to tackle some of the challenges that have arisen because of COVID-19. These conversations will be continued for the remainder of my term and I am an ardent believer in the importance and benefits of volunteering.



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Committee Meetings Attended

- General Faculties Council - November 2
- Iniskim Education Committee - November 12
- Arts & Science Council - November 18
- Campus Women's Centre Collective Meeting - November 26
- Student Fee Review Committee - November 23 & 27
- CKXU Board Retreat - November 29
- Student Awards Committee - November 30

These are some of the meetings where I represented the student voice, but does not capture the full detail of the work that I do. If you have any questions or want to chat more about this report, please send me an email!

With gratitude,
Richard Lee-Thai